

The Progressive Review

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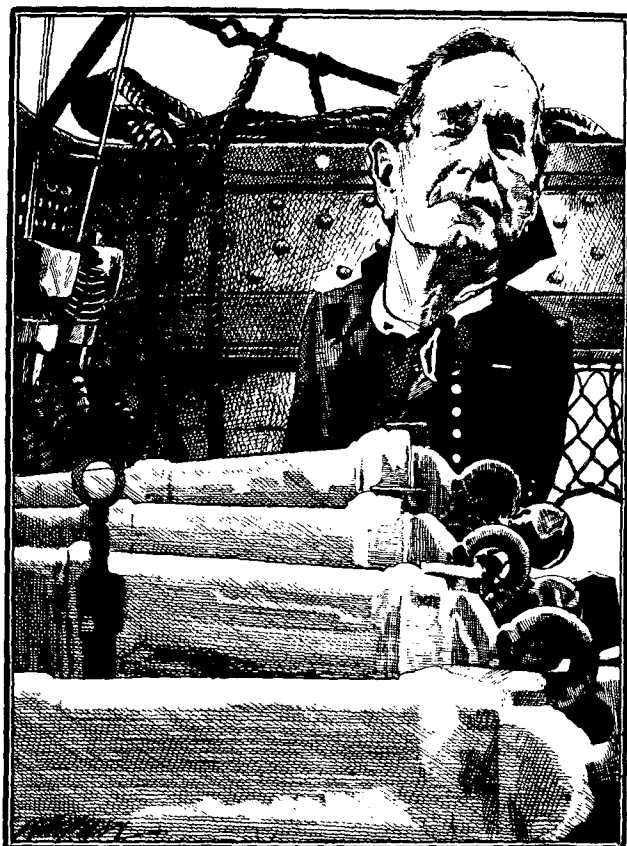
America's Official Secrets Act

Elaine Mittleman

The Other Danger of Star Wars

Keeping Cities Cool

Weather Report



Waghorn

Eurotrash

Several European cities have successfully diverted over 50% of their waste stream by such methods as source-separation recycling and mechanical processing prior to incineration. According to a new report from the Institute for Local Self Reliance, La Buisse, France, actually diverts 73% of the waste stream. Singen, West Germany, uses composting to divert 65%. Says Bernd Franke, research scientist for Garbage in Europe, "West Germans are moving away from composting mixed waste refuse and moving toward composting source-separated

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organic materials. Close to 20 communities have established collection and processing programs for these materials." Meanwhile, Switzerland and Sweden require separation of batteries and a national level, while other countries have community programs for battery collection. Info: ILSR, 2425 18th St. NW, DC 20009 (232-4108).

Free needles in Oregon

Portland, Oregon, has the nation's first program for the distribution of free hypodermic needles to drug addicts as part of the effort to stem the spread of AIDS. The nation's more than one million drug addicts are the fastest growing group of AIDS victims. Law enforcement officers have generally opposed these programs (see the last issue of PR), while medical and scientific experts have advocated them. Interestingly, when the Portland program was publicized in the local paper, it did not receive a single complaining call or letter.

Bureau of Environmental Statistics?

Writing in the Lancaster Independent Press, Paul R. Portney proposes the creation of a Bureau of Environmental Statistics, modelled on the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Bureau of Economic Analysis, buffered from both politics and budgetary triage. Portney points out that our present data gathering is terribly inadequate. For example, what data we have on airborne lead comes from only 53 monitoring stations intended to represent the entire country. Virtually no monitoring of ozone is carried out in rural areas, despite the effect of ozone levels on crop losses. And as for a national program that monitors all the toxic air pollutants causing widespread concern? It doesn't exist, say Portney.

He continues: "The situation is even bleaker for water quality monitoring and for measurements of pesticides and other substances in soil, on foodstuffs, and in fish, bird and other animal populations. The same is true for data on the levels of toxic substances in human body tissues (a small monitoring program was recently eliminated) and for measurements related to wetlands and a host of other sensitive ecosystems.

"In short, we are woefully ignorant of the current state of our environment, of how that state compares with the past, and of the role that current policies may have played in accounting for the differences between past and present. To make matters worse, the data that do exist are not at all accessible to interested parties."

Now they tell us

Now that Reagan is safely a lame duck, the corporate press is finally admitting what the alternative media has repeatedly pointed out: the national media played straight man to the Reaganites for eight long years. A story in the Columbia Journalism Review some months back detailed information on Reagan's governorship that the media simply ignored. Now the Washington Post runs an Outlook piece full of mea culpa quotes from your favorite national journalists. Among the examples cited, the removal of Raymond Bonner as New York Times correspondent in Central America following complaints from the Reagan administration (see PR #245). Writes Mark Hertsgaard in the Outlook article: "As central members of Washington palace-court

society and creatures of the national establishment, the media institutionally were disinclined to offer basic criticism of a presidency that above all else articulated and advanced the interests of the American elite. 'We share the same basic assumptions of bankers, lawyers and the rest of the establishment,' noted CBS senior producer Tom Yellin.

Mass burn incinerators nixed

Austin, Philadelphia and Seattle have all announced that plans for building mass burn incineration plants are dead. Alternative technologies, primarily recycling, are now being considered to relive the flow of solid waste to landfills. Says Neil Seldman of the Institute for Local Self-Reliance: "Only when (a) city stops pouring all of its time and money into mass incineration will recycling get the attention and support it needs. Recycling can divert 60-80% by weight of the waste stream from landfills. This is more than mass burn incinerators, which cannot burn everything and which leave a toxic ash residue that requires costly landfills."

Since 1986, some 20 incinerators have been cancelled for economic and environmental reasons, totalling an investment of over \$3 billion. According to Gail Vittori of Citizens for Sensible Waste Management

in Austin, local realtors came over to their side after being shown the bottom line. Austin City Councilman George Humphrey credits the newly elected city council members who were business-oriented. In Seattle, Washington, Mike Ferro of the Sierra Club states that "it was the economics that switched the votes. As much as I would wish that environmental and health risks swayed the votes, that was not the case."

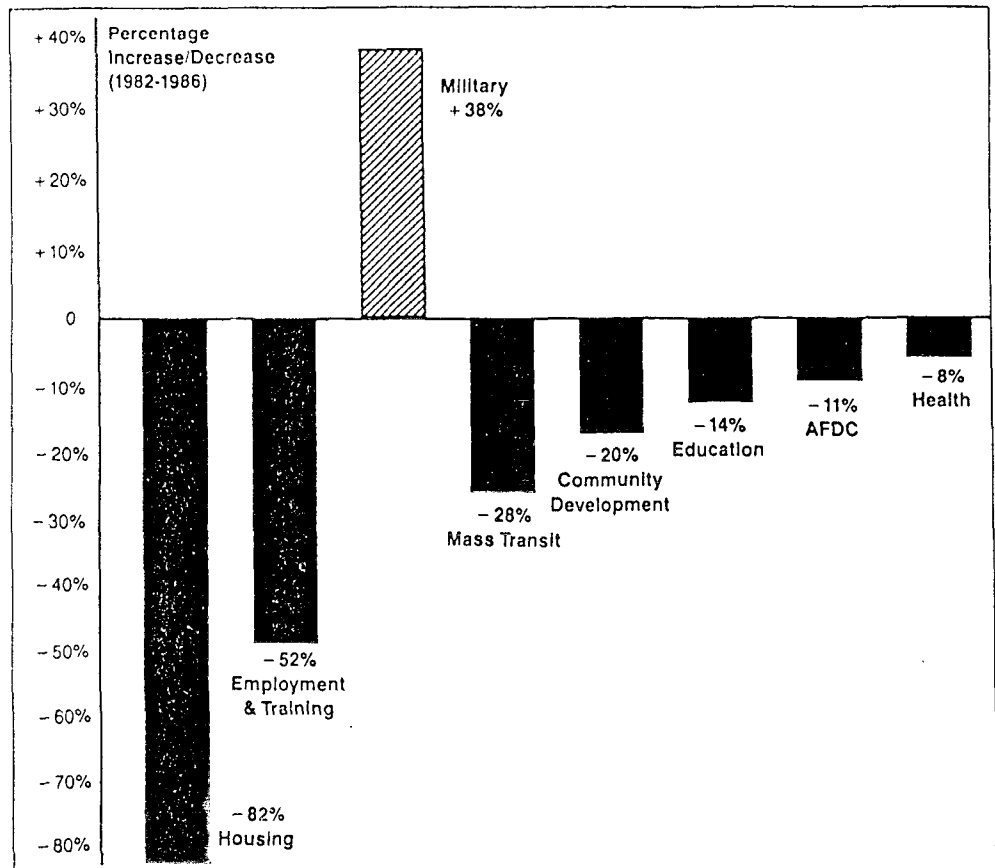
Pouring Nukes on Troubled Oil

The nuclear industry is trying to recover its lost momentum by a public relations campaign touting itself as the answer to dependence on imported oil. Ninety-six percent of all oil used in this country runs vehicles and industry and heats homes and businesses. Only four percent goes to generate electricity. And of that four percent only two-fifths comes from foreign oil. On the other hand, raising the fuel efficiency of automobiles from 26 miles per gallon to 60 by 2008 would save enough oil to free use of foreign dependence, says the Safe Energy Communication Council.

Eliminating Nukes from Troubled Budgets

The Center for Defense Information estimates that the total number of US nuclear weapons required to

THE MILITARY BUDGET IS A LOCAL ISSUE



The continuing arms race is draining our cities of vital resources. In 1987, a town of 60,000 people paid approximately \$12 million in taxes for nuclear weapons programs and \$692,000 for Star Wars alone. The chart to the right illustrates the changes in federal budget priorities from fiscal years 1982-86.

Chart courtesy of Jobs with Peace Campaign, compiled with data from Department of Defense documents, the FY87 Federal Budget, and the Fiscal Planning Services report, "The Republican Record, FY 1982-86," prepared for AFSCME.

THE MYTH OF EQUALITY

FACT:

With an all-time high of 1.2 million American marriages ending in divorce each year, for the first time in history a couple marrying is just as likely to be separated by divorce as by death.

FACT:

In the first year following divorce, statistics show that while men's standard of living rises an average 42%, for women and their children it drops a sickening 73%.

FACT:

Almost one female-headed family in three is poor; about one in eighteen families headed by a man is poor.

FACT:

Women receive child custody in 9 out of 10 uncontested divorce cases. Support was awarded only 59.1% of the time.

FACT:

A 1984 survey by the Census Bureau revealed that only half of women received the court-ordered child support due them. A quarter received only partial payments; and another quarter received nothing at all.

FACT:

A Colorado study found that two-thirds of fathers are ordered to pay less each month for child support than they are spending on car payments.

FACT:

In 1983, 13.9% of divorced women were awarded alimony. Of these, 23% received none of the alimony due them. Among those receiving payments, the average amount was \$3,980 a year.

FACT:

Non-custodial fathers' defaults on child support payments have cost their children \$4 billion a year.

NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund

completely destroy the Soviet Union as a functioning society is 1000, all of which could be carried on eighteen missile submarines. If war planners want a force sufficient to destroy all Soviet missile silos and other nuclear capabilities, a maximum of 3200 would be required. This numbers could be maintained at sea at all times with a total force of 35 submarines.

If ultimately, war planners decide to target every city, missile silo, airfield and navy base, and eliminate all strategic weapons and industrial sites in the Soviet Union, the total number of US nuclear warheads required would be 3800. That number is only one-third of the 12,683 nuclear warheads that the United State is currently prepared to explode in the Soviet Union. Which is just one reason that Rear Admiral Gene La Rocque, director of CDI, thinks the military budget could be reduced by \$50 to \$100 billion. For a copy of this important report send \$1 to CDI at 1500 Mass Ave NW, DC 20005.

Quayle and Bentsen

J. Danforth Quayle has averaged an 11% ADA voting record during his House and Senate tenure. In the last three years, in fact, his record has been running 0-5%. On the other hand, Lloyd Bentsen is nothing to cheer about. He's run a 38% average, improving slightly to 43% during the Reagan years.

Sanders doing well in Vermont

Bernie Sanders, the four-term socialist mayor of Burlington, Vt., was in a virtual tie with a GOP candidate in his race for Congress, according to the most recent poll taken about two months ago. The poll showed Sanders running four to 15 points ahead of possible Democratic candidates. Since then, Paul Poirier, considered the most conservative of the Democrats, has narrowly won his party's primary. Sanders race is attracting national attention from progressives as his election would introduce an unusually progressive voice to the House of Representatives. Contributions are welcomed and can be mailed to Sanders for Congress, PO Box 391, Burlington Vt. 05402 (802-865-4911).

Corrections

An article in The Living Section yesterday about duck research misidentified a center that serves as a kind of "fat farm" for ducks. It is the Cornell University Duck Research Laboratory in Eastport, L.I.

The New York Times regrets that since the purchase of the paper in 1896 by Adolph S. Ochs its editors have presented a distorted view of American and world history due to the fact that they are part of the ideological superstructure of U.S. and world capitalism.

They would hope to do better after the social revolution and beg their readers' indulgence until that time.

--Tuli

GET THE HOGS OUT OF THE CREEK

Jim Hightower

There's an old country saying down in Texas that sums up our central economic need today. These people say, "The water won't ever clear up until you get the hogs out of the creek." That's our problem, friends--the fat hogs have been turned loose in the creek, and they are fouling the economic waters for you and me. We've got to get the hogs out of the creek.

For eight hard years Reagan and Bush have pushed down upon us a pernicious philosophy of greed--a philosophy that says, "I've got mine. You get yours." "Never give a sucker an even break." "I'm rich, you're not." "Adios chump!"

Now, here comes George Herbert Walker Bush II, perpetually preppie. He's of the Kennebunkport Bushes, don't you know. He's a toothache of a man, telling us to stay-the-course, and threatening to lead us from tweedledum to tweedledumber.

He would have us believe that the elixer of trickle-down economics has produced an unprecedented prosperity in America. "A boom," he squeals. "A boom." Before you swallow that whole, however, ask yourself this question: A boom for whom?

Eighty percent of the American people, your family and mine--have lost income as a result of the economic policies that George Bush wants to continue.

Check your own purse, look at your own savings account, balance your own income with out-go, and you will find that the Reagan-Bush program has brought a lot more bust than boom to America's families.

Meanwhile, the wealthiest among us, the richest one percent of Americans--George Bush and his buttoned down buddies--have enjoyed a 50 percent increase in their incomes. That amounts to an average bonus of \$129,000-a-year for each member of this upper crust. They are the ones who have been fattened by the Reagan-Bush tax-cut giveaways, pentagon spend-a-rama and miserly credit policies.

Bush's elite are out at the yacht club tonight, sitting about in their Guccis and Puccis, sipping a delightfully fruity and frisky white wine, saying, "Play it again, George. Play it again."

These guys are not merely the well-off. They are the powerfully rich, the ostentatiously rich. Who are they? Their average income is \$275,000-a-year! They have an average net worth of nearly \$5 million each. Honk if that's you!

It's not, of course. Most Americans don't get to spend much time at the yacht club sipping wine. Most of us in today's topsy-turvy economy are lucky if we can stop off at the 7-Eleven and pick up a Tall Bud and a Slim Jim. We're wondering what planet George Bush is on when he talks about all the prosperity he's created.

But, George has always been in another world. His is an upper-class world in which wealth is given to you at birth. He is a man who was born on third base and thinks he hit a triple. Some people say, we shouldn't be too hard on George. He's doing his best, they say. And of course, that's what's so sad, isn't it.

It's time to throw the snooty rascals out and put a people's President in the White House. --From an address to the Democratic National Convention

Jobs Creation: Carter & Reagan

Low-paying Jobs
as % of Total

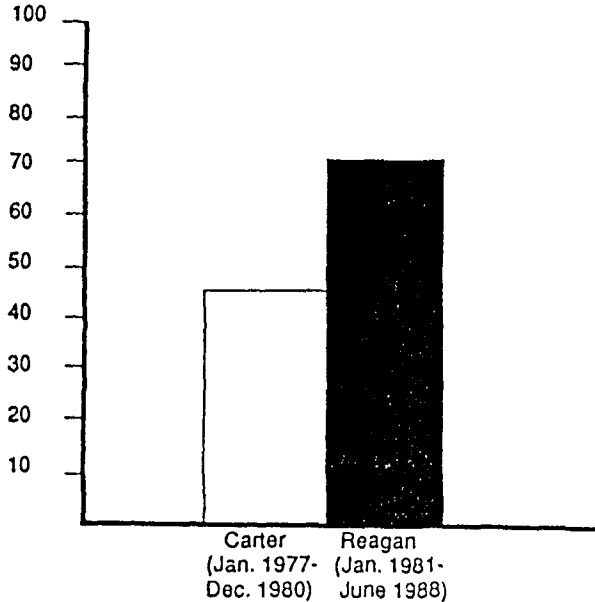


Figure 1

Comparison of Low-Paying Jobs with All
Jobs Created under Carter and Reagan

Employees
(000s)

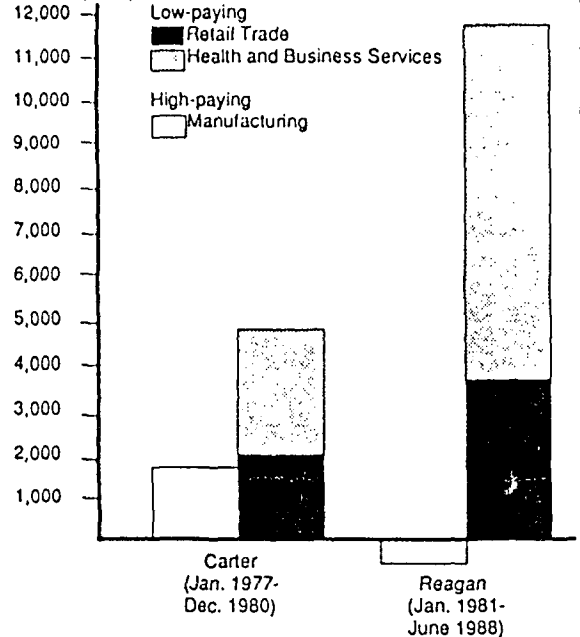


Figure 2

Low vs. High-Paying Jobs Created
under Carter and Reagan

Average
Annual
Increase

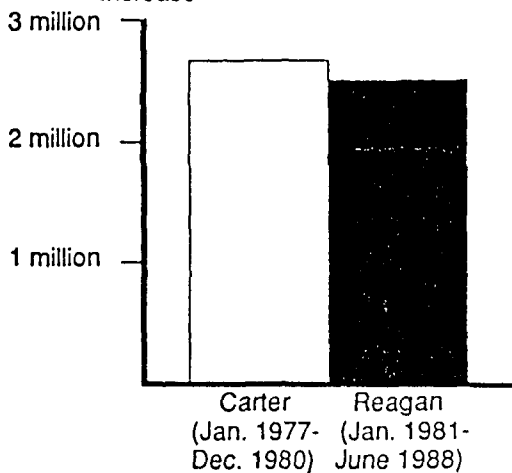


Figure 3

Job Creation: Carter vs. Reagan

Part-time
Jobs Created
(000s)

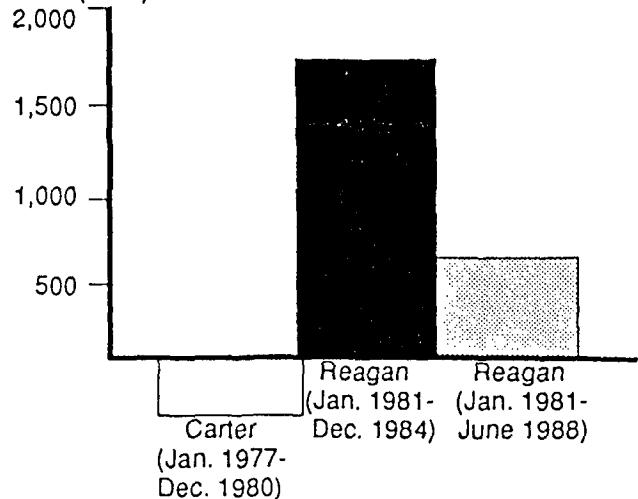


Figure 4

Part-Time Jobs Created: Carter vs. Reagan

America's Official Secrets Act

Elaine Mittleman

Presidents and executive branch officials of every recent administration have complained about leaks, particularly of what they call "classified" information. The Reagan administration, in its ever-increasing attempts to stop these leaks, has created government secrecy agreements, which about two million government employees with access to classified information, have been forced to sign. The employees must sign these forms, typically called Standard Form 189, to maintain their security clearances. The agreements allegedly create a contract between the government and the employee, and put a number of restrictions on workers, including a lifetime commitment not to divulge classified information without prior approval. Since many employee's jobs require security clearances, if the employees refuse to sign, they could easily be transferred to a lesser position or fired.

Although employees started having to sign these forms in 1983, the real uproar about them began last year, when some employees, including noted whistleblower Ernest Fitzgerald, questioned the language in Form 189 and refused to sign. As the controversy escalated, those refusing to sign were threatened with termination. U.S. District Court Judge Oliver Gasch has ruled that the forms' use of the word "classifiable" to describe information which may not be divulged was not properly defined, and so, unconstitutional. The government office in charge of these forms, the Information Security Oversight Office, will soon issue new ones avoiding the term "classifiable." In spite of the litigation, the forms have not been struck down and the two million employees who signed the old forms will still be bound, presumably, unless Gasch's ruling is overturned.

One of the most troubling aspects of these forms is that they can be used to get whistleblowers through selective enforcement. A time-honored practice has been to label as "classified" any information which an administration does not want revealed. These secrecy pledges are being used to restrict the flow of valid information about the functioning of the executive branch rather than to stop dangerous leaks to spies. There has been no indication that leaks have diminished since these forms were created (Oliver North and Fawn Hall, among others, signed them). Indeed, it is not clear how they would be used to fire someone suspected of leaking. For some time there have been on the books criminal prohibitions against leaking classified material, so these new agreements are, at best, superfluous. Of course, the administration argues that civil punishment for leakers is easier to obtain than criminal. But that punishment for leaking

is not what the forms are about - they are designed to catch suspected whistleblowers, among them, those who have expressed grave concerns about signing in the first place. Surely, the last group to quibble over wording of a form would be actual spies.

A further problem with the forms is that they are wholly a product of the executive branch. The authority to require these secrecy agreements came through a National Security Decision Directive, which is an executive edict issued without authorization or review by Congress. It is important to understand that Congress has passed no legislation permitting or requiring these secrecy pledges. Indeed, after they became controversial last fall, Congress included a provision in the December spending resolution prohibiting expenditures to carry out the pledges. That prohibition was struck down by Judge Gasch and is the issue which may go to the Supreme Court. Congressional members were unhappy with the forms, particularly because they thought requiring federal employees to sign them was a maneuver by the administration to keep certain employees from telling Congress what was really going on - all in the name of national security. Many on the Hill remember Watergate, and do not want bureaucrats silenced under the pretense of classified information.

The sad truth at this time is that the forms still exist and are binding. The litigation so far has not invalidated them, and Congress' prohibition in the spending resolution has been ineffective because it was struck down by the court. Many, particularly those whistleblowers and others who want freedom of speech for government employees, strongly believe Congress must take a much firmer stand in banning these secrecy pledges.

Elaine Mittleman is a Washington attorney.

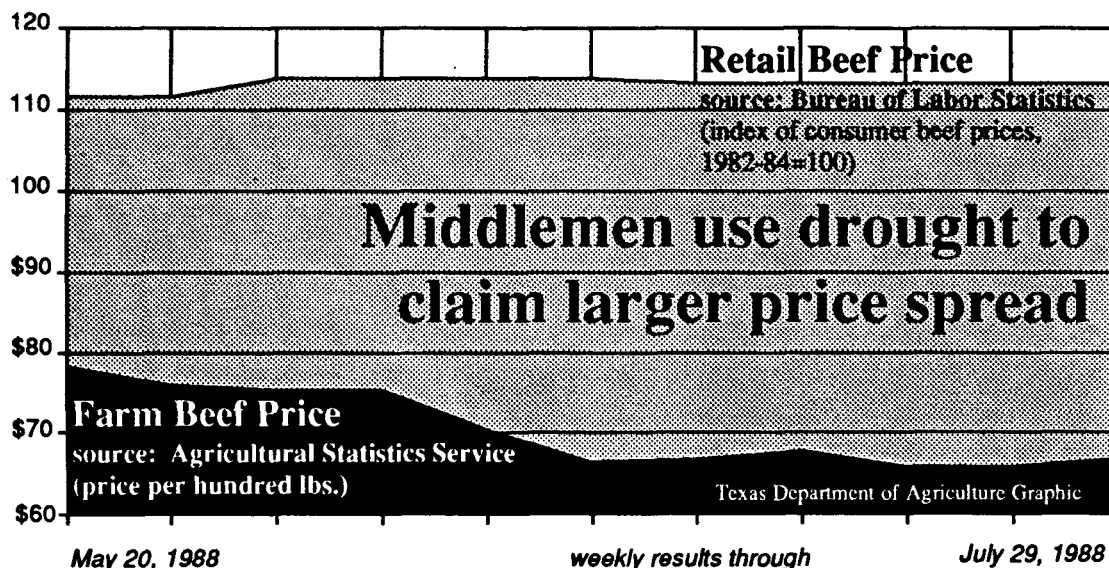
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Who got the spread?

Consumers get no benefit from 15% drop in farm beef prices



Keeping Cities Cool

Jonathan Marshall

As cities grow, so does the average gap between their summertime temperature and that of surrounding rural areas. A metropolis of five million people will show an average heat difference of four degrees in summer, and often much higher.

"The largest reported temperature difference that I've seen was 15 degrees Celsius (27 degree Fahrenheit) at Fairbanks, Alaska," says Thomas Karl, a research meteorologist at the National Climatic Data Center in North Carolina. "New York City has heat islands as high as 10 degrees Celsius (18 degrees Fahrenheit)."

The reasons for this hot-box effect aren't mysterious. Cities "are heated by exhaust from air-conditioning plants, furnaces, engines and the built-up heat in asphalt and concrete surfaces," notes Kenneth Watt, a professor of environmental studies at the University of California at Davis.

Dark roofs and streets soak up heat and shimmer in the sun. As much as 40 percent of the entire city of Los Angeles, for instance, is paved for cars, a vast expanse that absorbs heat during midday and radiates it back as the sun goes down.

Tall buildings block the wind and trap heat that would otherwise escape skyward.

When trees and grass give way to concrete and

asphalt, water runs off in storm drains rather than carrying away heat through evaporation.

Crowded cars, industry and even human bodies raise temperatures as well.

The result, Karl explains, is "a heat island that can grow and even escape outside the city. A nice park can be caught up because the warmth overtakes the whole area."

The good news is that nothing so formidable or expensive as global climate change may be needed to cool things off for the sweltering masses. In fact, the answers are as cheap and low-tech as they come.

A team of scientists at Lawrence Livermore Berkeley Laboratory, led by physicist Art Rosenfeld, argue that planting urban trees and switching to light-colored surfaces on roofs, streets and parking lots would "effectively reduce building cooling loads and peak power" requirements and "are the cheapest way we know of saving energy and money, and reducing carbon dioxide emissions."

In a recent paper, they cite studies indicating that properly located trees, and shrubs reduce the daily air-conditioning electricity use by as much as 50 percent.

The plants shade buildings from the sun and use up heat to evaporate water. A survey of neighborhoods in

Sacramento, California found that those with plenty of trees enjoyed average temperatures as much as nine degrees lower than in unshaded parts of town.

Building materials and paint also have an enormous impact on how much sun a city absorbs. Whitewashed Greek villages stay far cooler than cities built of red brick. A house with reflective paint in a light-colored neighborhood of Sacramento uses over 60 percent less energy annually than its darker counterparts. And less air-conditioning in turn means less heat turned loose into the atmosphere.

Reflective rooftops and fine white sand rolled into asphalt streets and parking lots can also dramatically reduce heat islands and air conditioning bills. This prescription may cost next to nothing if implemented gradually, as roofs are repaired and streets repaved. City governments could require new office buildings to have highly reflective roofs and could encourage residents to think cool when repainting their homes. If enough surfaces are designed to reflect heat, the entire city will enjoy cooler days and evenings.

The LBL scientists calculate that such simple

strategies are an exceptionally effective means of saving energy, a mere tenth as expensive as newly generated electricity.

And by reducing power demands, such policies will limit the need to burn fossil fuels that contribute to the global greenhouse effect. Planting 100 million urban shade trees would have the same effect on greenhouse gases as planting 15 times as many forest trees.

It can be done. The city of Los Angeles planted a million trees as part of a beautification campaign before the 1984 Olympics, at a cost of less than a million dollars.

"We think these measures will not only mitigate the heat island but create an oasis in the cities so they are even cooler than rural areas," says Hashem Akbari, a member of the LBL team.

Before Americans panic about long, hot summers to come or wait for global solutions, they should turn to natural air-conditioning for relief. More urban trees and lighter colors could make for a painless -- and pretty -- cure.

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One Day in the Lives of American Children

16,200 women get pregnant
2,753 of them are teenagers

1,099 teenagers have abortions
367 teenagers miscarry
1,287 teenagers give birth

666 babies are born to women who have had inadequate prenatal care
695 babies are born at low birthweight (less than 5 lbs., 9 oz.)
44 babies are born at very low birthweight (less than 3 lbs., 5 oz.)
72 babies die before one month of life
110 babies die before their first birthday

27 children die because of poverty
9 children die from guns
5 teens commit suicide

849 teens become sexually active
609 teenagers get syphilis or gonorrhea

1,868 teenagers drop out of high school

988 children are abused
3,288 children run away from home
1,736 children are in adult jails

2,269 children are born out of wedlock
2,989 children see their parents divorced

36,057 people lose jobs

--Children's Defense Fund

The Other Danger of Star Wars

Dietrich Fischer

Critics of Star Wars have long argued that the system would not offer reliable protection against a nuclear attack. That is what happened to the *Stark*, which was hit by an Iraqi Exocet missile, although it possessed the most modern automated air defense system.

But there is also another danger which has hardly been mentioned so far: Star Wars weapons could work, even when they are not supposed to. The shooting down of Iran Air's Flight 655 with the Vincennes' Aegis weapons system has made this painfully clear.

Aegis includes the most modern and sophisticated radar detection system. It was not supposed to confuse a military jet with a passenger aircraft. That turned out to be an empty promise, like the unsinkable *Titanic*, or safe nuclear power. Will we blindly accept such assurances about Star Wars?

Star Wars weapons will have to react to radar warnings within seconds, precluding human intervention. They could react to a false warning and set in motion a series of events that could trigger an accidental nuclear war.

A piece of debris hitting a space platform could be misinterpreted as a deliberate attack and could activate automated procedures, countermeasures and counter-countermeasures. Politicians would watch helplessly, like a sorcerer's apprentice, unable to stop the forces they had conjured up.

An accidental attack with Star Wars components would not necessarily remain limited to space. It could easily be mistaken as preparation for a nuclear attack, especially in a climate of great international tensions. Each side might feel under enormous pressure to seek to destroy the opponent's nuclear weapons before the opponent could do so.

Could the superpowers agree to a rapid cease-fire? It has taken then over forty years to negotiate the first modest reduction of nuclear weapons. How could anyone be certain that they could agree to a nuclear cease-fire within minutes, given that rational thinking is one of the first casualties in war?

From January 1979 to June 1980, there were 3,804 radar warnings of a possible Soviet nuclear attack on the United States. All of them, of course, were found to be false on human inspection. After that, the Pentagon stopped publishing those statistics, so as not to frighten the public. To turn over the decision to initiate combat to such a failure-prone automated system would be folly.

The computerized battle management system controlling Star Wars would be more complex than anything ever attempted before. Experts estimate that it would take more than a thousand individual pro-

Our Forgetful Editorialists

Extra!, the excellent newsletter of Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting notes that when the Soviets shot down KAL 007, the New York Times editorialized: "There is no conceivable excuse for any nation shooting down a harmless airliner." When the Americans shot down an Iranian jetliner this year, the same paper editorialized, "The onus for avoiding such accidents in the future rests on civilian aircraft: avoid combat zones, fly high, acknowledge warnings."

grammers to write the approximately 100 million computer instructions required. To believe that such a program could be free of errors, especially given that it could never be tested in reality, is fantasy. It is perhaps equally likely that a monkey hammering randomly on a typewriter would produce a work of Shakespeare.

Michael Dukakis opposes the deployment of weapons in space for good reasons. Why does George Bush press so hard for a system that could endanger our own security? Obviously, it would channel billions of dollars to the defense industry for years to come.

Recently, the Reagan Administration awarded a \$1 billion contract to Martin Marietta to study the feasibility and desirability of Star Wars. But Martin Marietta is not a disinterested party. It hopes to build Star Wars components and would hardly jeopardize its future profits by arguing against the system. Asking Martin Marietta to evaluate Star Wars is as if Edwin Meese had been asked to investigate his own possible role in the WedTech scandal.

Improving our security is primarily a political problem and cannot be solved by a technological fix alone. During the big debate in 1969 over whether or not the United States should build an anti-ballistic missile system, it was argued that it was not yet technically feasible to build a "dense" ABM system against Soviet missiles. But that was not considered so important, because the Soviet leadership was seen as relatively reasonable and reliable. The great danger, it was said, came from the Chinese. They were so fanatic and unpredictable. All the United States really needed, it was argued, was a "thin" ABM system to keep out Chinese nuclear missiles.

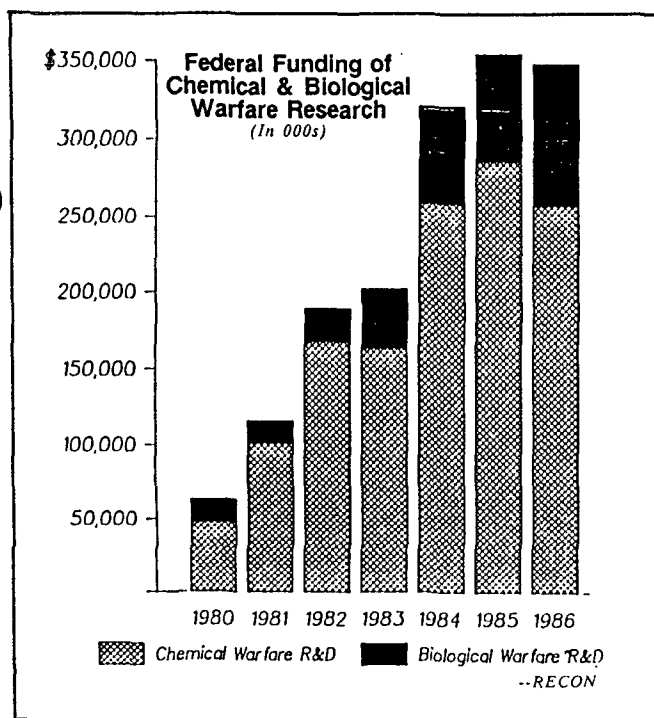
Today, hardly anyone in the United States is afraid of a Chinese nuclear attack, but not because of a thin ABM system. It is because of better relations. With over 20,000 Chinese students in the United States and a quarter million Americans visiting China each year, neither side fears a nuclear attack from the other. It is time to treat the Soviet Union like China.

When a Soviet fighter shot down KAL's Flight 007 over Sakhalin, the favored explanation here was that the Russians were brutal, inhuman, evil; therefore the United States needed more nuclear weapons.

Now that an American warship has caused a similar tragedy, will we begin to realize that our greatest enemy is not Russia, but the giant war machine that we have built up together and which could escape our control some day?

If we turn over the decision to initiate combat to a highly automated system like Star Wars, we might all share the fate of the passengers of Flight 655. People tend to *react* to catastrophes, rather than anticipating and preventing them. Are we able to heed the warning of Flight 655? Or will it take a catastrophe involving nuclear weapons before we wake up? That might be too late.

Dietrich Fischer, an Associate Professor of Computer Science at Pace University and member of the Pace Peace Center, is author of *Preventing War in the Nuclear Age* and co-author of *Winning Peace* (forthcoming in December 1988).



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Trading debt for nature

Jerry Emory

Can small portions of the Third World's staggering debt be transformed into rescue missions capable of saving Third World forests while helping feed and employ the rural poor? This is the vision driving a set of innovative "debt for nature" swaps now underway in a number of Latin American countries.

The new south-of-the-border financial deals resemble debt equity swaps in which debtor countries give investment privileges to corporate or private lenders. But they have radically different goals.

An estimated 50 million acres of tropical forests are destroyed or severely damaged annually by debtor countries in their search for ways to meet interest payments on their collective \$1 trillion foreign debt. The debt for nature swaps aim to break the cycle -- providing alternatives for governments to invest in prudent management rather than exploitation of their natural resources.

In July 1987, Washington-based Conservation International purchased \$650,000 worth of discounted Bolivian debt certificates on the secondary debt market. As the new holders of a minute percentage of Bolivia's \$4 billion total debt, CI negotiated with Bolivia to establish conservation and sustainable-use land areas totaling almost 4 million acres.

As part of the agreement, a \$250,000 endowment was created to manage and protect the 330,000-acre Beni Biosphere Reserve in Bolivia's eastern lowlands. Its future ensured, the Beni avoided membership in Latin America's sad fraternity *parques de papel*, or parks that exist only on paper. "Debt for nature" swaps were born.

Although each swap is unique, typically a conservation group buys a tiny share of a country's foreign debt. After negotiating with the government, the debt is exchanged for local currency or, more commonly, into interest-bearing bonds. These funds, now "re-invested" in the debtor country, are managed by an in-country national organization for use in environmental projects.

Soon after CI's Bolivian success, the World Wildlife Fund purchased \$1 million worth of Ecuador's debt, exchanged it for bonds issued by Ecuador's Central Bank, then transferred those bonds to Fundacion Natura -- one of Latin America's largest and most influential conservation organizations. The interest from those bonds will help manage national parks, purchase additional land, train scientists and further environmental education.

In Costa Rica, the Nature Conservancy International converted \$250,000 worth of debt into bonds totaling \$190,000 to help purchase additional land and manage the 24,700-acre La Selva Protected Zone.

These three organizations, along with seven others, recently finished a cooperative swap in Costa Rica totaling \$4.5 million to benefit eight land preservation and scientific projects. Ecuador has recently announced its willingness to negotiate an additional \$10 million in deals with interested parties.

However, there are potential pitfalls.

Peruvian agronomist and ecologist Marc Dourojeinne believes that some Latin American governments have serious reservations about debt swaps. "Up to now, debt for nature swaps have worked in Costa Rica, Ecuador and Bolivia, relatively small countries where it is easier," Dourojeinne says. "But in larger countries, like Peru, there are political concerns about dependency and foreign intervention in internal affairs... Some feel the best decision is not to pay any debt at all, so why be concerned about debt for nature swaps."

Nevertheless, Peter Seligman, CI's executive director, believes swaps will continue because "they are a win-win situation for the countries involved. They reduce the pressure on foreign debt and focus dollar resources on resource conservation."

Both the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund -- the two largest brokers of Third World debt -- have expressed interest in negotiating debt for nature swaps. Their involvement could introduce these deals to other tropical countries in Asia and Africa.

British environmental consultant and rain forest expert, Dr. Norman Meyers, a former resident of Kenya, believes swaps could succeed in Africa. "In Tanzania, for example, they have the big Serengeti migration plus some of the richest forest in the whole of Africa. Tanzania is also one of the poorest nations on the face of the earth. They are backed against the wall with debt."

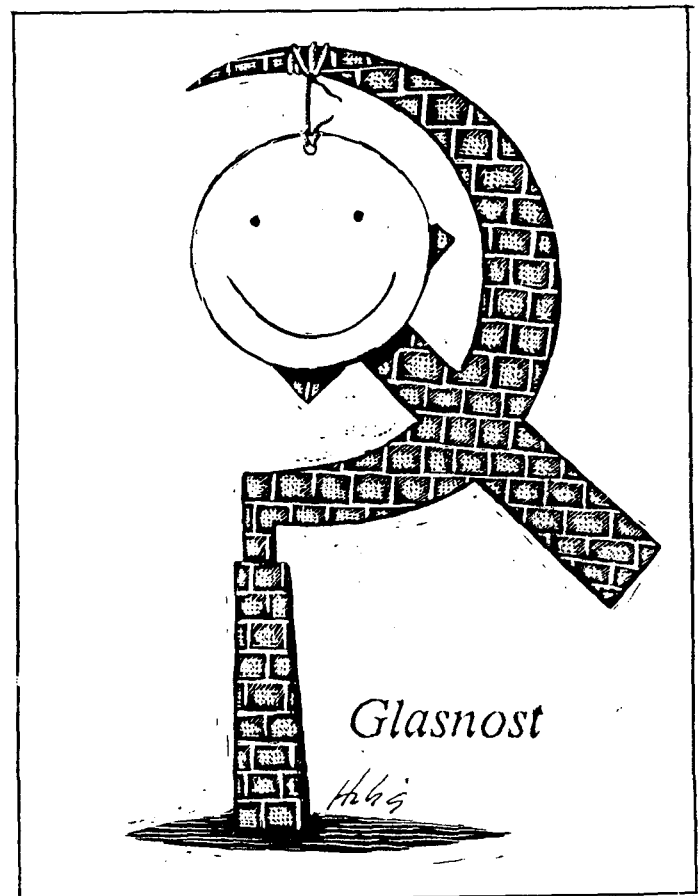
Biosphere reserves, land management programs originally conceived by UNESCO in 1971, are now being adopted as part of debt for nature swaps in a number of countries. Bolivia's Beni Biosphere Reserve is one example. The concept is to shelter a "core zone" (often a national park), surrounded by "buffer

zones" which support the small-scale use of renewable resources by local people.

Bill Gregg of the U.S. National Park Service, who co-chairs a program coordinating 43 reserves in the United States, describes the reserves as hybrids between traditional conservation-oriented national parks and sustainable development projects that address "the legitimate demands of growing human populations for food, firewood and shelter."

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Jerry Emory is a natural history writer and a columnist for Pacific Discovery where an earlier version of this story appeared



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